

Mustang Makers

Tri-State Aviation's shops are packed with P-51s

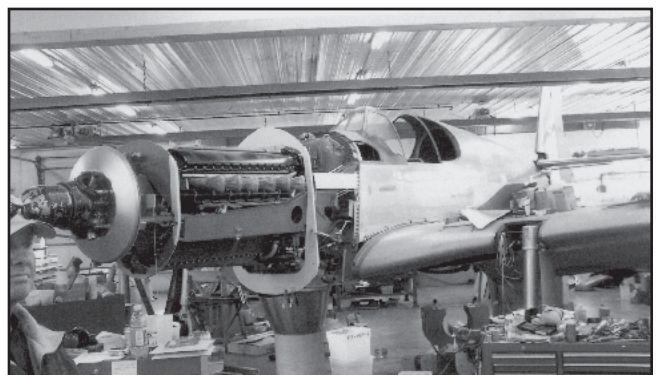
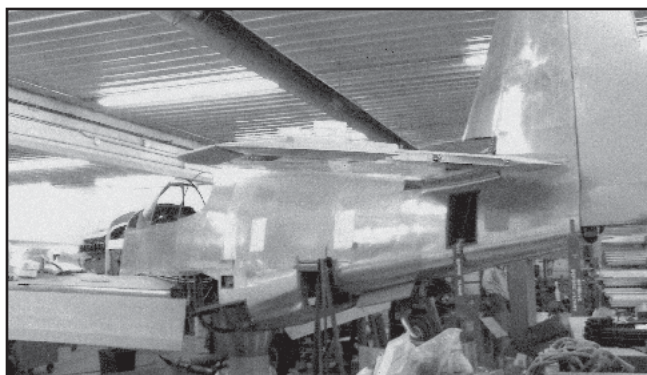
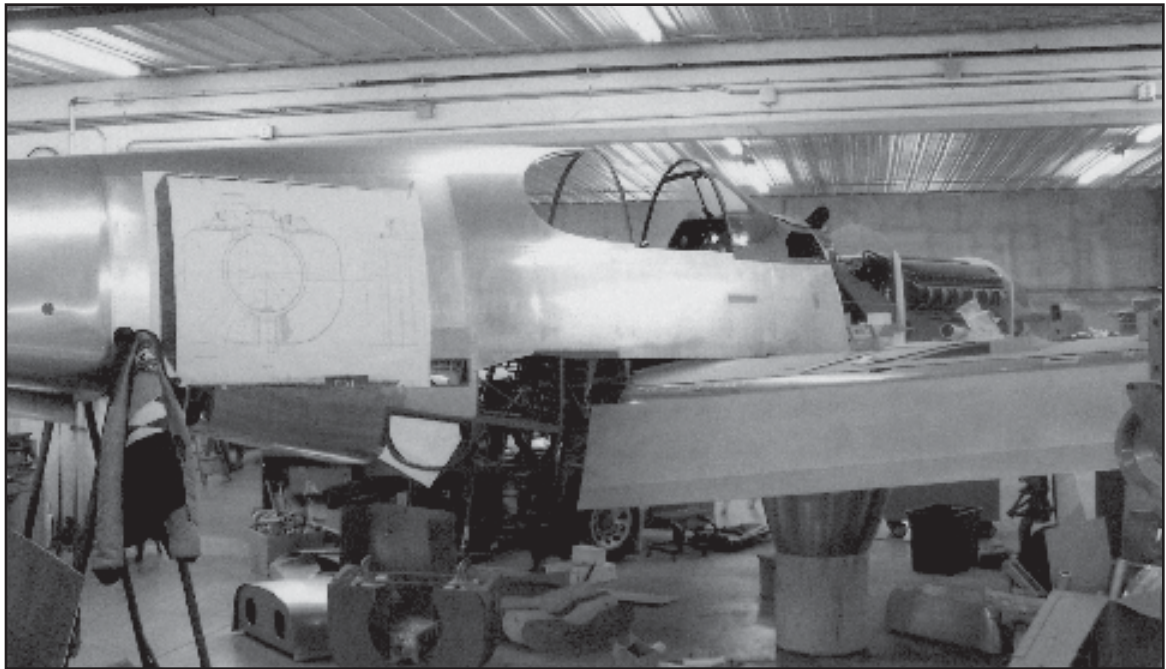
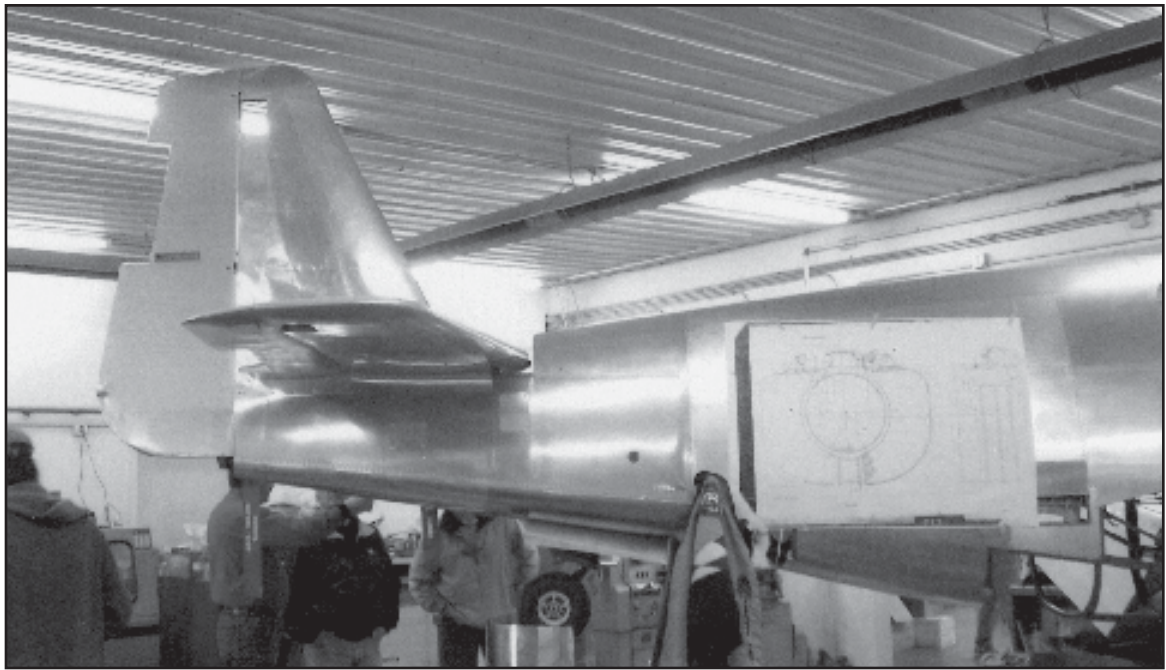
PHOTOS BY DICK PHILLIPS



Gerry Beck's Tri-State Aviation in Wahpeton, North Dakota, currently has eight P-51 Mustangs in various stages of restoration or flight condition. Recently emerged from Tri-State's shops is Paul Ehlen's N51PE, 45-11586. Ehlen, of Bloomington, Minnesota, has finished his Mustang in the colors of *Little Horse*. On Ehlen's wing is Bob Odegaard in N151RJ *Dazzling Donna*.



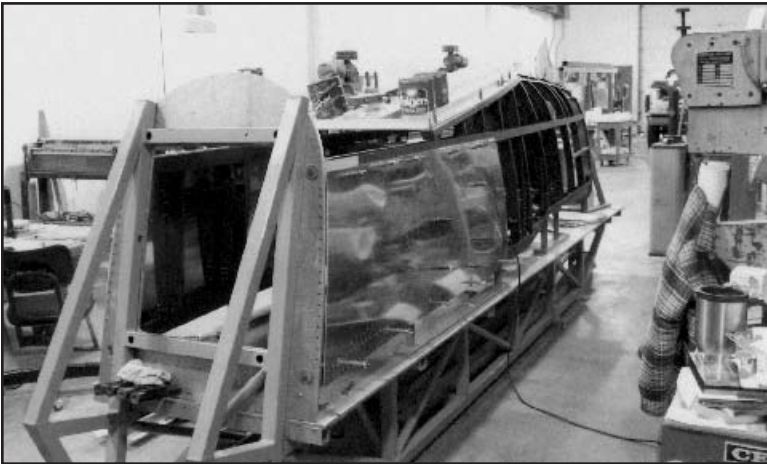
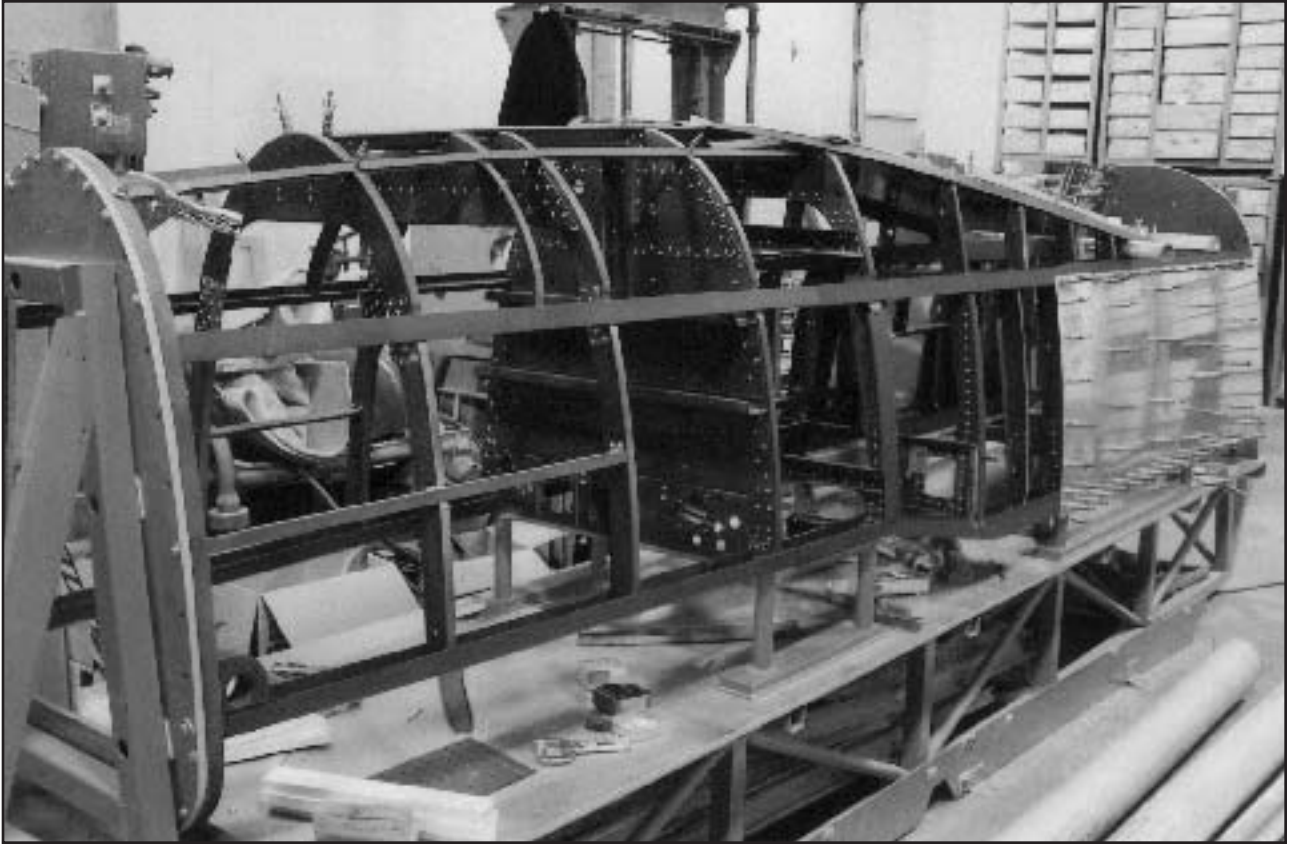
Progress photos of the Commemorative Air Force's P-51C fuselage under rebuild with Gerry Beck. After seeing the wreckage, many believed the aircraft was a total loss. Currently, the fuselage is taking shape and will fly once again in honor of the Tuskegee Airmen.



Gerry Beck's Allison-powered P-51A is almost ready for its radiator installation. As the cost of Merlin engine parts escalate out of sight, the relatively reasonable Allison engine is becoming an attractive alternative.



Little Horse on the ground and in the air. This aircraft is a total ground-up rebuild having been written off when owned by Harry Tope.



Jim Beasley's P-51K Frenesi, N357FG, is undergoing a complete fuselage rebuild.



Marius Maxwell's P-51D 44-72826, N51YS, wears the name *China Doll*. This aircraft previously flew as *Old Boy*, and was surplused from the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF 9563) in 1947.



The fuselage of Pony Maples' P-51D project is nearly complete. At present, the aircraft's identity is unknown.



N251L, 44-63864, crashed in Iceland in June 1963. This wreckage is owned by Stephen Gray, and parts will be incorporated into the rebuild of his Mustang G-CBNM.